

Blue River Water District
Blue River, OR

November 17, 2021

Mr. Nathan Ohle
Rural Community Assistance Partnership
1701 K Street, NW Suite 700
Washington, DC 20006

Dear Mr. Ohle:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) for its time, effort, and expertise in helping the Blue River Water District recover from the 2020 Oregon wildfires. Our community has benefited from the services provided by RCAP. We needed assistance to solve the many issues and the RCAP representative, Jason Carman (RCAC), has been very helpful to us.

The Blue River Water District serves the beautiful community of Blue River in Lane County, OR. The community of approximately 300 people is located where Blue River empties into the McKenzie River. The Holiday Farm Fire mostly destroyed the community. This destruction included the complete loss of the buildings and electrical equipment that supported the two wells, which are the sole source of water for the system. There was also widespread damage to the distribution system, from both the fire and subsequent recovery efforts.

RCAP provides us with the expertise and resources we need. It would be much more difficult for the district to address the water system recovery issues without RCAP's help. I'm also certain that there are many other small communities that have similar problems and need the same type of services that we do. Blue River Water District certainly supports funding for RCAP's assistance programs. We strongly believe that your services and support are a key component for continued improvement in America's rural water and wastewater systems.

Mr. Carman and RCAC have been assisting us with several issues, including:

- **The FEMA Public Assistance application process and subsequent documentation**
- **Technical assistance with water system operation and management**

In closing, with RCAP's assistance, we expect to fully recover from the wildfires and improve the efficiency and operation of our drinking water system. The services we are receiving from RCAP are very important to rural communities like ours, who struggle to find the resources, expertise, staff capacity, and financial support they need to operate our drinking water system. We appreciate the services and experienced assistance you have provided us. We support continued funding of RCAP so that you may continue with your beneficial work to other rural communities across the country.

Thank you,



Joshua Cloke, Board President
Blue River Water District

To Whom This May Concern,

January 28, 2022

I wanted to share a recent experience that I had with RCAC and how they've helped me and my rural community. They have been such a valuable resource and their presentations have personally helped me immensely.

I moved into a small rural community in Coupeville WA that was developed in 1987 a little over two years ago. Our community has an aging population with a Home Owners Association responsible for community roads and water. We have 35 total lots, all being five acres, with 30 of those lots currently connected to our system. I wanted to educate myself on this system so I contacted our water coordinator and met him at the well house to discuss the flow of water and components within our system.

As we started to go over the various components I asked him the age of the components and cost for replacement? His answer was, "I really don't know." I then requested we bring in our water management company to answer the same questions. This is when I found out that we had well over a million dollars of equipment, but no money in community reserves for replacement or failure. Our community believed in special assessments over establishing reserve funds when a component failed. I personally felt that philosophy was financially unhealthy and this started my quest to establish a reserve fund within our community.

On the recommendation of a local civil engineer I was notified of an organization that gives training classes on water systems, RCAC. To better educate myself I registered for the Fundamentals of Financial Management course which is where I met Dessa Wells. The class was so informative and just what I needed heading into an annual meeting of our HOA. I had to convince our aging population, that has never established a reserve fund, the importance of one for our financial security. The information Dessa distributed was so valuable, but the connections that I made were equally important. I was able to explain my situation, receive class and instructor input which gave me the knowledge needed for my presentation.

I asked Dessa at the conclusion of the class if she would be willing to speak to me regarding my situation, and she agreed. She was able to forward me more information including multiple links of applicable resources. Dessa has been nothing short of terrific in assisting me. I presented my case to the community, fortunately gained support and was able to pass a motion for a reserve study to be conducted which is the start of establishing a reserve fund.

In closing, I would not have been able to accomplish my objective of establishing a reserve fund within our community had I not received the information provided from RCAC. The applicable information, contacts made and resources provided were so valuable to me and my situation. I recently attended the Utility Board Roles and Responsibilities class where I was asked to tell my story of establishing a reserve fund. I received private messages from attendees asking me to contact them regarding similar situations in their community. The information and networking provided by RCAC is extremely valuable and allows people like myself the resources to make educated choices to improve our water systems.

Sincerely,

Scott Fox
Sky Meadow Community Association
Coupeville Washington